

Telecommunications Tower Siting Policy

(NOTE: In general, the following are the guidelines which will be used to deliberate a proposed tower location relative to Substantial Accord and/or Zoning approval. Meeting these guidelines will not automatically address site specific concerns. Additional conditions may be imposed and/or recommended to address such concerns to further insure compliance with the Comprehensive Plan or the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance in the instance of a zoning action.)

Definitions

For purposes of this Policy and the Comprehensive Plan, the term “flush mount” shall be defined as follows:

Antenna, Flush Mount –

1. Communication Towers. Communication tower antenna(s) that protrude from the face of the communication tower structure no more than two feet.
2. Electric Transmission Structures.
 - a. Communication antenna(s) co-located on electric transmission structures incorporating a safety platform that protrude from the face of the electric transmission structures no more than seven feet measured to the point of the triangle formed by the antenna array.
 - b. Communication antennas collocated on electric transmission structures without a safety platform that protrude from the face of the electric transmission structures no more than two feet.

Design

- In addition to design features identified in the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, use of sectorized arrays in areas developed for residential uses shall be discouraged.
- Satellite dish and microwave dish antennas attached to telecommunications towers shall not exceed six (6) feet in diameter and shall be of a neutral color with no logos.

Structure

Prior to use of a freestanding telecommunications tower, the owner of the tower shall have obtained approval of the structural integrity by a registered professional engineer licensed in Virginia and a copy of the report filed with the Planning Department.

Setbacks

- From property line – The minimum setback from the boundary of the property on which the telecommunications tower is located shall be the principal building setback for the zoning district or the “fall zone” as certified by a registered professional engineer licensed in Virginia, whichever is greater. If the “fall zone” establishes the setback, then the required certification shall be filed with the Planning Department at time of site plan review. No habitable structures or places where people gather shall be located within any “fall zone.”
- From existing off-site dwellings – The minimum setback from existing off-site dwellings shall be as follows:
 1. For towers one hundred (100) feet or less in height, the minimum setback shall be 200 feet;
 2. For towers greater than 100 feet in height, the minimum setback shall be 300 feet.
- From public rights-of-way - The minimum setback from public rights-of-way shall be as follows:
 1. For towers one hundred (100) feet or less in height, the minimum setback shall be 50 feet;
 2. For towers greater than 100 feet in height, the minimum setback shall be 75 feet.
- Exceptions – The minimum setback requirements from off-site dwellings and from public rights-of-way, as noted above, may be decreased or waived, at the determination of the Planning Commission, if a substantial stand of vegetation is preserved within the setback from the property line/fall zone. This preservation would not prohibit the removal of vegetation to accommodate access or the placement of ground-mounted equipment.

Signs

No advertising sign of any type, except signs which may be required by state or federal guidelines, shall be placed on a telecommunications tower or related facility.

Security

The base of the telecommunications tower and related facilities shall be enclosed by a minimum six (6) foot high fence designed to preclude trespassing. A detailed plan depicting this requirement shall be submitted to the Planning Department for approval in conjunction with site plan review. If the telecommunications tower site is located within a fenced area, or otherwise secured area where access is controlled solely by the service provider/operator, as determined by the Planning Department, then no other fence shall be required.

Screening

The base of the telecommunications tower and accessory ground mounted equipment or structures shall be screened from adjacent properties by evergreen plantings. If security fencing is required, then the evergreen plantings shall be located between the security fence and the property line. If security fencing is not required, the evergreen plantings shall be located within the lease area and no more than twenty (20) feet from the items to be screened. The evergreens shall have an initial height and spacing sufficient to provide immediate screening. A detailed plan depicting this requirement shall be submitted to the Planning Department for approval in conjunction with final site plan review.

Removal

At such time that the telecommunications tower ceases to be used for communications purposes for a period exceeding twelve (12) consecutive months, the property owner(s) and/or cell tower owner(s) and/or lessee(s) shall dismantle and remove the tower and all associated equipment from the property.

FCC "Shot Clock"

Every effort will be made to act on a tower site application within a reasonable period of time. Under state law, the Planning Commission should make a decision on a tower site application within 90 days, excluding time extensions to which the applicant consents, or else the application could be deemed approved. The applicant's consent will be sought and documented for delays or deferrals, where appropriate.